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Are you or a neighbor struggling with winter heating costs? Energy assistance is still available, but funds are running out

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For Immediate Release:

SAINT PAUL – Even though it's been feeling a lot like spring lately, many Minnesotans may still be struggling with winter heating costs.

April 15 marks the end of this winter's Cold Weather Rule, which protects residential customers from having their natural gas or electric service shut off. But that date does not always mean the end of Minnesota's heating season.

To keep the heat on through the spring, Minnesota Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman urges Minnesotans who need help paying their heating bills to apply for the state's Energy Assistance Program and establish a payment plan with their utility, if they have not done so already.

Minnesota consumers using delivered fuels such as fuel oil, propane or wood to heat their homes are also eligible for energy assistance.

Energy assistance applications will be accepted until May 31, but funds are limited and households are served on a first-come, first-served basis. To apply, call 1-800-657-3710 or visit the [Minnesota Energy Assistance Program](#) on the Commerce Department website.

"I especially encourage seniors, veterans, people with disabilities and families with children to apply for energy assistance to make sure that everyone stays warm and safe through the spring," said Rothman. "Funds are still available, but may run out by the end of this month. Minnesotans in need should apply now to make sure they can secure help."

The Commerce Department administers the Energy Assistance Program in partnership with 30 local service providers across the state. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program helps renters and homeowners earning at or below 50 percent of the state's median income (\$47,194 for a family of four) obtain grant money to help pay their heating bills.

Energy assistance funds go directly to the energy provider on behalf of eligible households. The average annual grant per household is about \$500. Last year the program helped 133,000 Minnesota households.

Media Contact:

Ross Corson

Director of Communications

[Minnesota Department of Commerce](#)

P: 651-539-1463 | C: 651-368-5050 | ross.corson@state.mn.us